

APPENDIX D

FRATRICIDE AVOIDANCE

Fratricide is defined as the employment of friendly weapons that results in the unforeseen and unintentional death or injury of friendly personnel or damage to friendly equipment. Fratricide prevention is the platoon leader's responsibility. All leaders across all operating systems assist the platoon leader in accomplishing this mission. This appendix focuses on actions the platoon leader and his subordinate leaders can take with current resources to reduce the risk of fratricide.

In any tactical situation, it is critical that every platoon member know where he is and where other friendly elements are operating. With this knowledge, he must anticipate dangerous conditions and take steps either to avoid or to mitigate them. The platoon leader always must be vigilant of changes and developments in the situation that may place his sections and teams in danger. He also must ensure that all squad and team positions are constantly reported to higher headquarters so that all other friendly elements are aware of where they are and what they are doing. When the platoon leader perceives a potential fratricide situation, he personally must use the higher net to coordinate directly with the friendly element involved.

D-1. EFFECTS

Fratricide results in unacceptable losses and increases the risk of mission failure; it almost always affects the unit's ability to survive and function. Units experiencing fratricide suffer these consequences:

- Loss of confidence in the unit's leadership.
- Increasing self-doubt among leaders.
- Hesitancy in the employment of supporting combat systems.
- Over-supervision of units.
- Hesitancy in the conduct of night operations.
- Loss of aggressiveness in maneuver.
- Loss of initiative.
- Disrupted operations.
- General degradation of unit cohesiveness, morale, and combat power.

D-2. CAUSES

The following paragraphs discuss the primary causes of fratricide. Leaders must identify any of the factors that may affect their units and then strive to eliminate or correct them.

a. **Failures in the Direct Fire Control Plan.** These occur when units do not develop effective fire control plans, particularly in the offense. Units may fail to designate engagement areas or to adhere to the direct fire plan, or they may position their weapons incorrectly. Under such conditions, fire discipline often breaks down upon contact. An area of particular concern is the additional planning that must go into

operations requiring close coordination between mounted elements and dismounted teams.

b. **Land Navigation Failures.** Units often stray out of assigned sectors, report wrong locations, and become disoriented. Much less frequently, they employ fire support weapons in the wrong location. In either type of situation, units that unexpectedly encounter another unit may fire their weapons at the friendly force.

c. **Failures in Combat Identification.** Vehicle commanders and machine gun crews cannot accurately identify the enemy near the maximum range of their systems. In limited visibility, friendly units within that range may mistake one another as the enemy.

d. **Inadequate Control Measures.** Units may fail to disseminate the minimum necessary maneuver control measures and direct fire control measures. They also may fail to tie control measures to recognizable terrain or events. As the battle develops, the plan cannot address branches and sequels as they occur. When this happens, synchronization fails.

e. **Failures in Reporting and Communications.** Units at all levels may fail to generate timely, accurate, and complete reports as locations and tactical situations change. This distorts the common operating picture at battalion and brigade level (available on FBCB2) and can lead to erroneous clearance of fires.

f. **Weapons Errors.** Lapses in individual discipline can result in fratricide. These incidents include charge errors, accidental discharges, mistakes with explosives and hand grenades, and use of incorrect gun data.

g. **Battlefield Hazards.** A variety of explosive devices and materiel may create danger on the battlefield--unexploded ordnance, booby traps, and unmarked or unrecorded minefields, including scatterable mines. Failure to mark, record, remove, or otherwise anticipate these threats leads to casualties.

h. **Reliance on Instruments.** A unit that relies too heavily on systems such as GPS devices or FBCB2 and Land Warrior will find its capabilities severely degraded if these systems fail. The unit will be unable to maintain situational understanding because it will not have a COP. To prevent potential dangers when system failure occurs, the platoon leader must ensure that he and his platoon use a balance of technology with traditional basic soldier skills in observation, navigation, and other critical activities.

D-3. PREVENTION

The measures outlined in this paragraph provide the platoon with a guide to actions it can take to reduce or prevent fratricide risk. These guidelines are not intended to restrict initiative. Leaders must learn to apply them, as appropriate, based on the specific situation and the factors of METT-TC.

a. **Principles.** At the heart of fratricide reduction and prevention are five key principles:

(1) ***Identify and Assess Potential Fratricide Risks During the Troop-Leading Procedures.*** Incorporate risk reduction control measures in WARNOs, the OPORD, and applicable FRAGOs.

(2) ***Maintain Situational Understanding.*** Focus on areas such as current intelligence, unit locations and dispositions, obstacles, NBC contamination, SITREPs, and the factors of METT-TC. The SBCT infantry platoon gains an advantage in situational understanding with FBCB2 and Land Warrior by automatically updating the COP.

(3) ***Ensure Positive Target Identification.*** Review vehicle and weapons identification cards. Become familiar with the characteristics of potential friendly and enemy vehicles, including their silhouettes and thermal signatures. This knowledge should include the conditions, including distance (range) and weather, under which positive identification of various vehicles and weapons is possible. Enforce the use of challenge and password, especially during dismounted operations.

(4) ***Maintain Effective Fire Control.*** Ensure fire commands are accurate, concise, and clearly stated. Make it mandatory for soldiers to ask for clarification of any portion of the fire command that they do not understand completely. Stress the importance of the chain of command in the fire control process and ensure soldiers get in the habit of obtaining target confirmation and permission to fire from their leaders before engaging targets they assume are enemy elements. Know who will be in and around the area of operations.

(5) ***Establish a Command Climate that Emphasizes Fratricide Prevention.*** Enforce fratricide prevention measures, placing special emphasis on the use of doctrinally sound techniques and procedures. Ensure constant supervision in the execution of orders and in the performance of all tasks and missions to standard.

b. ***Guidelines and Considerations.*** Additional guidelines and considerations for fratricide reduction and prevention include the following.

(1) Recognize the signs of battlefield stress. Maintain unit cohesion by taking quick, effective action to alleviate stress.

(2) Conduct individual, leader, and collective (unit) training covering fratricide awareness, target identification and recognition, and fire discipline.

(3) Develop a simple, executable plan.

(4) Give complete and concise operation orders. Include all appropriate recognition signals in paragraph 5 of the OPORD.

(5) To simplify operation orders, use SOPs that are consistent with doctrine. Periodically review and update SOPs as needed.

(6) Strive to provide maximum planning time for leaders and subordinates.

(7) Use common language (vocabulary) and doctrinally correct standard terminology and control measures.

(8) Ensure thorough coordination is conducted at all levels.

(9) Plan for and establish effective communications.

(10) Plan for collocation of CPs whenever it is appropriate to the mission, such as during a passage of lines.

(11) Make sure ROE are clear.

(12) Conduct rehearsals whenever the situation allows adequate time to do so.

(13) Be in the right place at the right time. Use position location and navigation devices (GPS or POSNAV), know your location and the locations of adjacent units (left, right, leading, and follow-on), and synchronize tactical movement. If the platoon or any element becomes lost, its leader must know how to contact higher headquarters immediately for instructions and assistance.

(14) Establish, execute, and enforce strict sleep and rest plans.